Retta F. Yeager

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Pocahontas County

(18)

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Huntersville District embraces the greater part of the eastern half of ~~XXX~~ Pocahontas County. To the north lies Greenbank District, while in the east it is separated from Highland and Bath Counties in Virginia by the summit of the Allegheny Mountain range, on the south lies Little Levels District and on the west Edray District. West of the center and extending northeast from near Huntersville, almost to the northeast boundary are the Browns Mountains. In the southern part is a series of mountains called the Beaver Lick range. It is crowned by several lofty peaks. Just south of the latter is a level plateau or table land of considerable extent. It was covered at one time with a lofty forest of white pine and is known as the white pine plateau. The pine timber was cut and shipped to various markets and much of the plateau is now of second growth and is owned by the government, in Monongahela forest. Knapps Creek and its tributaries drain the entire surface. The latter are Little Back Creek, Douthard's Creek, Cochran's Creek and Brown's Creek.

The first settlers in this district were Moses Moore, John Bradshaw and Peter Lightner. (Both of the latter have already been mentioned in former papers sent in.) They were not long permitted to enjoy the solitude of their lonely homes alone for other pioneers came and settled beside them.

The schools of those pioneer days were what were called subscription or select schools and were usually taught

for a few months in the year by one of the pioneers, who in his youth had enjoyed superior educational advantages. The text books used were Dilworth's Speller and some ~~from~~ *poor* works the Bible as a reader.

The first of these schools "kept" in this district was in a deserted log cabin which stood on the banks of Knapps Creek, not far from where Huntersville now stands. It was a five-sided structure, one side of which was taken up with a huge fireplace. The seats were made by splitting small logs in halves and inserting pins for legs in the oval sides. It is not known who the first teacher was; there is no record. Traditions tell us Mary Moore was the first teacher. The Moores were the first to settle on Knapps Creek and were a prominent family. It is not definitely known who preached the first sermon. Tradition again tells us that it was the Apostle of Methodism,--the noted Bishop Asbury. The names of many pioneer Ministers are remembered and recorded by the old residents.

Everywhere in the settlement of the west the frontier preacher was an important factor and scarcely was the roof of the cabins made fast before the Methodist Circuit rider or the Baptist Missionary made his appearance, collected the neighbors, preached a sermon, left an appointment for some time, perhaps a year in the future; then after a friendly farewell he continued his journey to another settlement.

Among those who first visited Pocahontas County were the Reverends James Avis, John Miller, Amos Smith, J. W. Kenney,

James Watts, Samuel Ellis, William McDowell, Elisha Knox, James Kerr, William Houston, Harvey Lawyers, N. Pendleton and John Howe.

The first Presbyterian Church at Huntersville, was organized by Rev. Mitchell D. Dunlap in 1854. Among the first members were Hugh McLaughlin, Sr. James A. Price, George E. Craig. A house of worship was erected the same year on the 12th day of August 1854. William Gammon, Benjamin Herold and James T. Lockridge, on behalf of the Church contracted for erection of a Church for $1,846.00.

The Methodist Episcopal Church (South) of Huntersville was organized in 1866 by Rev. P. S. E. Sixes. Before the division of the Church in 1844 into Northern and southern branches, the Methodists had an organization at this place but the Huntersville Church then belonged to what was known as the Levelton Circuit.

Mount Vernon Church, built in 1850 was the first ever erected on Knapps Creek. For its erection $400 was raised by subscription and the remainder was paid by Andrew W. Moore, Moses Moore and Preston Moore. It was dedicated in June 1852 and the Rev. John McClure became its first pastor. During the war between the states called by some the Civil War, the soldiers made a barracks of the Church and at one time threatened to burn it but were prevailed upon to desist such an act of vandalism and today its stands as monument of the religious zeal and Christian enthusiasm of generations now passed away.

Among the first members were Leonard Heron, Jennie Heron,

George Rider, Harvey Curry, Mary A. Curry, Moses Moore, Isabella Moore, Preston Moore, Andrew Moore, Anna Moore and Elizabeth Lightner. George Rider was the first Class Leader.

Huntersville was the only town in the district at that time but in later years Frost has become a small town. Huntersville was laid out in 1821 and was the County Seat until it was moved to Marlinton after it had become a small town, by the vote of the people.

Huntersville is situated on the left bank of Knapps Creek six miles from its mouth. It is surrounded on all sides by lofty mountains and has, perhaps, more the appearance of an Alpine village than any other town in the State. Its elevation 1900 feet above seal level.

Moses Moore already mentioned as one of the first settlers located on Knapps Creek more than one hundred years ago,--at least one hundred and fifty years ago- as is attested by records. There was an old Indian trail or Valley Draft as it was once called, by which the Indians traveled when on their missions of blood to the settlements on Jacksons River and in the Shenandoah Valley.

This trai led near by where Moses Moore settled on the land once owned by his grandson Andrew W. Moore. As might have been expected it was not long before he was carried into captivity by Jordanites. but made his escape and returned to his mountain home. Twice more before the savages were stayed beyond the Ohio River he was carried a prisoner to their towns on the Scioto River.

After his return the last time he purchased all the lands lying on Knapps Creek up to Mount Vernon Church then standing on the farm of Andrew Herold and still standing on the same farm now owned by Richard Gibson. This tract included several thousand acres and as the records show, Moses Moore gave in exchange for it "Two steel traps and two pounds sterling money".

Rella F Yeager